

RUSSIA'S GRIP FAST ON OUTER MONGOLIA



Types of the Kalmuks and the Sharras—Mongolian tribes.

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To sit down in an ill-smelling little room in one of the Urga yoo-longs, with ceaseless noise within the "hotel" itself, in the square before it and the stable yard behind it, and to attempt to write a readable communication is to my manner of thinking a indication of a high order of confidence in one's ability; but to entrust the results of your labors, poor though they may be, to the courier "mail men" of this region and expect your letter to reach the Kalgan tea merchant who had vouchered that your messages would not fail to be delivered to his agents in Pekin is in itself evidence of a faith which does not balk at miracles.

It was an Irishman, of course, who wrote his friend: "If ye do not get this letter before I write me about it without delay," and I will confess that I take up the task of trying to enlighten the outside world relative to the situation in this will empire with a feeling which may be expressed: "If this letter does not come through before I do I'll tell the remainder of the story upon my arrival."

Yet, when I visited a part of Outer Mongolia three and one-half years ago, however, coming all the way to Urga, but only to within some 280 miles of it—I wrote eight or nine lengthy press communications and as many dozen personal letters, and truly remarkable as it was, a large majority of them finally reached those for whom they were intended. Nor is the result minimized, but rather enhanced, by the fact that some of the epistles reached Pekin three and four months after my own return. So much then for the chances of letters. Now, as to other matters.

If I were boldly to make the assertion that the vast empire of Outer Mongolia, as large as five Germanys, would within a decade be everywhere recognized as part and parcel of the dominions of the Czar, who is there that would dispute me? If I were to say that the authority of China, for centuries recognized by the feudal princes, hereditary chiefs and people of both Inner and Outer Mongolia, is less than a myth in this day, at least so far as the latter is concerned, and that not one farthing of tribute nor one slight homage will ever again be paid Pekin, there are any ready with facts and figures to deny the prophecy?

I presume there are, but they are not here in Urga. They are far away in other capitals of the world, most likely springing over ancient histories and studying charts and maps made half a century ago. Even in St. Petersburg, I dare say, nine-tenths of the bureaucracy would smile if questioned as to the near possibility of the flag of the Muscovite Black Eagle within ten years waving over the palace of the Hutukhtu, but recent events, even since my arrival three weeks ago, tell a story that is plainer and more satisfying than all the surmises which might be conjured up in a year.

Let me explain at the outset that neither the geographical nor the political lines supposed to demark the confines of the two Mongolias are at all plainly drawn either in the mind or in fact, but in Pekin as well as here Inner Mongolia is that great eastern portion tributary to the thriving city of Kalgan and more or less under the commercial domination of Manchuria and the Chinese capital itself. Its trade is almost wholly with the south and east and the eyes of its officials are most of the time turned in the direction of Pekin.

However, since both the Russians and the Japanese are appropriating nearly all things between themselves in the great province of Manchuria—the former acquiring the land as largely as possible and the latter driving the Chinese merchants from their former strongholds in the principal towns and cities—and especially now, with rebellion rife in south China, the Inner Mongolians are making advances to the Hutukhtu and the Order of Princes at Urga, to the end of themselves breaking loose from Chinese control.

Well informed officials have told me that this desire to break away from Pekinese authority has been growing from month to month during the progress of the rebellion in south China and that the Nourmings or Seven Chiefs of Inner Mongolia have been anxiously awaiting news of the fall of Pekin that they might them-

selves raise the standard of revolt, tear away from Chinese authority altogether and declare for the full and absolute sovereignty of the Hutukhtu.

Among these terribly ignorant people, and in this are included five of the Seven Chiefs, the Chinese rebellion has been magnified a hundredfold. The Manchus are even more fiercely detested here than they ever were in China proper, and the rallying cry of the southerners, "Let us slice up all the Manchus at the northern capital" (Pekin), has been cried aloud from a thousand hills of Inner Mongolia. Only at Kalgan itself was it apparent that the true situation in the Celestial Kingdom was known. In that city, which, by the way, is truly a place of torture for the residence of the foreigner, so terrible are its smells and noises and so dirty and beggarly its swarming thousands, in that city there are hundreds of agents of the big tea and opium concerns of the south, and it is naturally the business of these men, who are largely drawn from the more intelligent and enterprising commercial classes, to be informed of conditions in the republic. And they, in touch with events in China proper, know the southern rebels have not the faintest show of winning in their fight against Yuan and the Government. And of course their views are prevalent in Kalgan.

But in the remote cities, even in Burma and Baluta, both on the high roads of travel, the opinion prevails that at last the Manchus are to be driven back and baggage from Pekin, that Yuan Shih-kai will be impaled upon the walls of the Imperial City and that the former royal family will be tossed, one member after another, into the Devil's Well at Shingpo.

Yet for all this there has not been, so far as I am able to learn, any open defiance of Chinese authority, and Captain-General Tong-hoi, in supreme command of Inner Mongolia as the representative of the constituted authority of China, has despatched only twenty-odd officials in five months. But these punishments were not meted out to important offenders, only to unwise subordinates who had expressed a belief or a hope of the success of the rebel arms.

Captain-General Tong-hoi is the one official in all China or Mongolia with

Correspondent of "The Sun" Penetrates to Urga, Capital of Hidden Empire of the Hutukhtu, and Learns Important Facts Concerning Czar's Hold on Country

"Of course just now the rebellion in the south is absorbing the attention and power of the Government, but when all the rebels are dead or with their heads within boards the Hutukhtu will be asked to send an embassy of submission to Pekin, and if he refuses—

The military ruler of Inner Mongolia did not finish whatever he intended to say, but it seemed as if he meant that in all likelihood the Hutukhtu would refuse to pay homage to Pekin and in that event the republic would send an army against him to enforce acknowledgment of the sovereignty of China. If he meant to say that, it is a safe guess that he would not have believed his own words, for Tong-hoi is too well informed to believe that China will ever make an attempt to reclaim the "wild Mongolians," as the Hutukhtu's subjects are referred to, backed, fronted and sided as they are by the strong arm of the Czar—stronger by far in Central Asia to-day than when its fingers twitched nervously at Dalny, Port Arthur and Harbin.

I believe that China will be able to hold the position she has long held in Inner Mongolia, that is, unless the wholly unexpected happens and the southern rebels, led by Wang Hsing, are able to disrupt the republic, split it in twain and establish a seat of government at Canton for a new southern nation. I believe with Yuan Shih-kai successful and this is surely the most likely result of the present strife he will make the Pekin authority so strong that Captain-General Tong-hoi or such other representative as he may establish at Kalgan or Urga will be able to hold Inner Mongolia for the Chinese Republic.

But in the territory from the capital city of which I am now writing a wholly different state of affairs exists, and I look for the undisputed flying of the Russian ensign over all Outer Mongolia within the next ten years. Of course

Emperor's words finally reached Col. Nadejny and myself, seated upon a well worn carpeting of fur and woven grass.

The sing-song of the Hutukhtu were thus rendered into English by Col. Nadejny.

"I, I, Ning-leep-Siggi, God-Emperor of all the Mongols, tribesmen and hill-men and men of the cities of our vast empire, do grant the stranger in our midst full leave to see the wonders of our country. He shall not want for a meal of mutton nor skins to keep his body warm nor place to sleep. He may have all things, even rong-sie (vodka) in abundance. Let all true subjects of the God-Emperor beware of these words!"

Thus was I given formal welcome to the land of pure Heaven; the words of the Hutukhtu being repeated by the various message bearers, each in a stronger voice than the one before him and starting with the mere whisper of the God-Emperor, were acclaimed by the several hundred present in the throne room with shouts and the waving of arms. Outside the glad news of the welcome of a stranger within the gates was taken up by the multitude of idlers who daily congregate in the vicinity of the palace and who pass their time in munching upon sticks of dried mutton or venison and boasting loudly again and again and again of their allegiance to and love for the "great and only God-Emperor of all the Mongols."

Of course it was all very primitive and barbaric, surprisingly so in this age of the world, yet going to show that even in these days there are tremendous areas of the earth's surface throughout which the ways and doings of but half tamed man are most in evidence.

Nevertheless, it must not be assumed that the Hutukhtu of Mongolia is a dense minded individual who does on methodical ceremony and languishes in a shut in palace among many wives. It is true

that he supplies an entire Fourth of July or Twelfth of July parading organization—he appears more as a pyramid of fine furs and fabrics than a man, and but for the intimidation of one's surroundings a foreigner would be tempted to crane his neck inordinately and then laugh immoderately.

But no one laughs during an audience of the Hutukhtu unless the ruler himself gives a command to do so. And upon such a command being given, usually after the God-Emperor has ordained that certain tribesmen be put to death for some offence, fancied or otherwise, or banished to the "Starvation Hills" of the Turkestan frontier, where incessant fighting is going on between the tribes of the two countries, all that are within reach of the royal voice—through the attendants, as herebefore related—are expected to "split their sides" with mirth and be so filled with the humor of the occasion that tears shall run down their faces. And all this, of course, with out their being in the least aware of it, reason for the merriment excepting to them the very good one—it was the Hutukhtu's command.

There is nevertheless at least one man here who dares laugh in the presence of the God-Emperor without the latter's expressed injunction, a man who in fact is not only the boon companion of the high and mighty ruler but who is actually looked up to by the latter, Col. Alexander Federov Nadejny, absentee commander of the Ural Glinzky Cavalry, Special and Confidential Agent of the Russian War Office, "Prince-General Adviser to the Emperor of the Mongols" and chief military instructor of the Mongolian army.

And it was to this genial and brilliant Russian officer that I brought letters from the Czar's Ambassador at Pekin, letters which not alone gave me the pleasure of an acquaintance with an accomplished European gentleman hidden for the time being in quite inaccessible Urga, but with

Col. Nadejny about them, and he mildly remonstrated that they were not of interest to the outside world and that their publication could not be of the slightest possible benefit. In this we have not agreed and I shall attempt to enumerate some of them here for the enlightenment of those who may care to read.

Perhaps one of the most significant of recent events was the arrival on August 11 of the new Russian Consul-General, M. Eloff Miller, for years in charge of Mongolian affairs in the Foreign Office at St. Petersburg. He came to relieve Semov Korostovetz, and the latter will take the place vacated by Miller at the Russian capital.

In the ordinary course of events this change of Consul-Generals would not be of far reaching importance and upon the surface it has little about it to attract the attention of the world, but—

The new Consul-General from Russia is in reality the accredited Minister of the Czar "to the God-Emperor of the Empire of Mongolia." He shall present his credentials in due form to his Majesty the Hutukhtu, and at the same time relieve the Honorable Major Korostovetz, who enters the service of the Empire of Mongolia by permission of his Majesty the Czar Nicholas III.

Even this does not tell it all, for while Korostovetz goes actually or ostensibly to take the place in the Foreign Office vacated by Miller he is carrying credentials as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to his own sovereign. In other words, a Russian subject and officeholder goes to St. Petersburg as the personal and official representative of the Hutukhtu, and will at the same time, according to the information given out by the Russians themselves, take the place at the head of the bureau of Mongolian affairs in the Russian State Department vacated by the newly arrived Consul-General.

Consul-General Miller upon his arrival here was accorded such a reception on the part of the Government and populace as a visiting sovereign might expect. He came overland more than 650 miles accompanied by a full troop of Cossack cavalry, a complete battery of light field artillery and an official staff of eleven per-

sonnel installed at the Foreign Office in St. Petersburg.

More than three months ago word was received in Urga of the intended coming of Consul-General Miller and great preparations were made for his advent. When it was learned that he was actually on the way from Botun, where he left the Turkestan spur of the Trans-Siberian Railway, the Hutukhtu sent orders by swift riding couriers that all the tribesmen along the route should ride as escort a day's journey; the nearer clans relieving those more remote as the procession came along.

When within twelve leagues of the capital the Russian official was met by the God-Emperor himself at the head of what is perhaps one of the hardest regiments of horse in the world, the Hutukhtu's own regiment of "Strong Limbs," so termed because both men and horses have met every requirement imposed upon them by the combined military judgment of Col. Nadejny and the Hutukhtu.

The meeting of the two commands took place on the immense sandy plain of Vingmong ("Bloody Sand"), where in 1884 the present Hutukhtu's father met and defeated Prince Chief Pla, then in rebellion against the authority of Urga. Upon their greeting each other Consul-General Miller addressed the Hutukhtu in the most approved Mongolian, saying that he brought with him a long personal communication from the Czar, which he would deliver at such time and place as the Hutukhtu might appoint, and that in his train were valuable gifts from his august master to the high and mighty ruler of Mongolia.

Naturally the God-Emperor was immensely pleased to be addressed in his own language by one who before the present time had never spent a day in Mongolia; but he was still more gratified to learn from the lips of the new Consul-General that the Czar had taken such a fancy to the Mongol tongue that he was not only devoting much time to its study but that he was having his children educated in that language! One is indeed given to conjecture as to what will happen if the Hutukhtu pays a visit in state to St. Petersburg next summer as he has promised he would upon the Czar's invitation brought by the newest representative.

Upon the God-Emperor being informed regarding the gifts brought to him from the Czar his impatience to see them was so great that he requested Col. Nadejny to have the boxes opened then and there upon the plain of Vingmong, and so, with the hot sands blowing about their ears on this barren plateau 5,700 feet above Urga the costly and magnificent garments of embroidered silks, broadcloth and fur were exhibited to the happy, bulging eye of the ruler of the Mongols; and the great golden collar, with its inlays of precious stones and its heavy pendant Greek cross (it was proudly worn back to the city by the royal recipient).

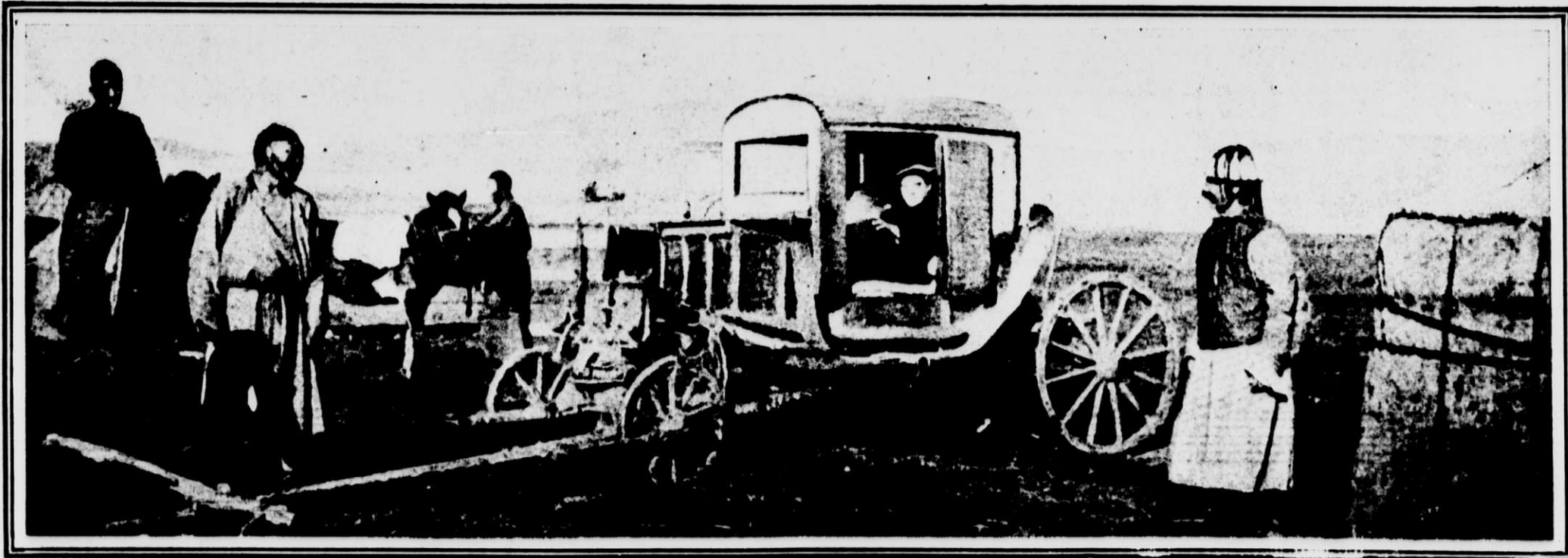
It is stated that the total value of the gifts sent by Nicholas to Ning-leep-Siggi, to the latter's wives and others of his household and to prominent princes and chiefs connected with the administration of affairs in Urga is not less than 50,000 rubles. The presents even included a fine wrought crown of hammered gold, in which were inlaid not alone the barbaric arms of Outer Mongolia but the skull and star of Tartary. Just why these latter were given a conspicuous place upon the kingly head ornament no one here has been able to fathom.

Even more significant than any of the foregoing in the eyes of your correspondent is the further fact that Consul-General Miller brought \$50,000 in gold coin with which to pay the salaries of Col. Nadejny and Major Skoboleff, Vartzig, Herrs and Listov, as well as the other two scores or more Russian officers who are engaged in the instruction of the Mongolian army. When I asked Col. Nadejny for an explanation of this he said, quite offhand, "We are just loaned to the Hutukhtu by our Government. It is simply a complimentary matter, an evidence of Russia's good will toward the Empire of Mongolia"—then he corrected himself: "The Empire of Outer Mongolia," he said.

"Why not the empire of Inner and Outer Mongolia?" I asked.

"Ah, that is quite another matter," he replied. Then he added: "You must not put such questions to me. I know nothing of the diplomatic or political sides of this country. I am only chief instructor to his Majesty and for his army."

Upon the going away of Major Korostovetz three days ago I was privileged



The tarantas, a Mongol conveyance for use in the mountainous districts.

such a title, it being given only to the "elected" commander directing the military affairs of the Seven Chiefs—told me at Durma that there was little if any discontent throughout Inner Mongolia, and that the authority of Pekin was readily and willingly recognized by the Seven Chiefs and the people. Of course the Captain-General lied, but that is a very large part of the duties of his high office and a questioner would indeed be witless were he to take all he says seriously.

He, however, did speak the truth—brought to him from Urga at intervals by his trusted spies—when he said: "But in Outer Mongolia there is trouble brewing for our Government (the Chinese) if we attempt to enforce respect for the authority of the republic. Russia is not only behind the Hutukhtu but in front of him and on both sides."

It would never do to say so out loud here in Urga or even to whisper it to ears untried, for even the Russian influence here would arrange for a silence that would last evermore, to say nothing of what the Hutukhtu would do to any one possessed of such a desire for truth speaking and extinction.

The God-Emperor—such is the translation into English of his title, and as a God-emperor he is regarded by the nine millions or thereabout of his subjects—was gracious enough to let me "sit at his feet," at a distance of some twelve or fifteen yards, for a few minutes on a recent day—on the tenth of the month, to be exact.

He sang something to one of his hordes of attendants who is called the "high lord of the tribes," the latter sang to another and he to still another before the God-

that his Majesty has more women in his household than he knows what to do with—thirty-seven, I am told, is his favorite number this year, he being that number of years old, thirty-eight next year, and so on—but he is a thorough man of the world as things go in Central Asia; a horseman of unusual ability in a country where every man and woman, almost, is an expert on horse or camel back; a fine shot with bow and arrow, javelin or modern rifle; more or less a military strategist and a disciplinarian à la Mongol who is the terror of those under him.

I would not call the God-Emperor a fine specimen of physical manhood as we of the West understand such a term, for he is too broad and thick to look well in uniform either afoot or a-horse, while in his imperial robes—pounds and pounds of padded silks and satins, with quite enough

a man who undoubtedly represents to the fullest the power of the Bear in Outer Mongolia.

It is just as well to have it said here as elsewhere that Col. Nadejny has in no manner cautioned or advised as to my making use of the matter he might give me nor the facts which I might be able to ascertain of my own accord. My letters to him stated that I was a press correspondent and he gave me welcome as such and caused my presentation to the Hutukhtu in that capacity.

And while I am about it I may say in my own behalf that as a newspaper man I have respected and will continue to respect those things which Col. Nadejny told me in confidence without characterizing them as such. But I must go still further. Certain matters having attracted my attention, I conversed with

sons. Five of the latter are officers of the line of the Russian army, and it is said that Col. Nadejny, who already has forty Russian officers assisting him in the modernization of the Mongolian forces, may draft them for service in his work if he deems additional instructors necessary.

It is noticeable that none of the other nations, not even China, has in Urga today a representative of the rank of consul-general. Great Britain is represented by a vice-consul, who reports to the British consul at Harbin; Germany, France and Spain have consular agents, and most of the other countries rely upon local merchants or professional men for their consular reports. The United States is unrepresented. Yet Russia has her Minister de facto at the court of the Hutukhtu and the latter will shortly have his Min-